

## **NEBCC Notes**

### **Meeting Thursday 2 November 2023**

**Present:** Cllr Phil Barron (Convenor), Cllr Karen Robert, Andy Parsons, Andy Harrop, Malcolm Rose (AP first meeting, Green Southwell)

**Apologies:** Southwell Young Farmers, Cllr Jamie Bostock

**Amendment of September notes** – MR noted that 'Irosha', is actually 'A Rocha'. AH noted the point about meadows vs trees, restoring soil carbon is an underestimated way of combating climate change, both meadows and trees are helpful.

**Non fossil fuel equipment use** – Battery-powered chainsaw 40 minute battery life. Discussion of hydrogenated vegetable oil or alternative.

**Relationship with TE cttee** - Need to ensure good communication between NEBCC and TE cttee, as sometimes takes a long time for minutes of TE to be published on website. PB not previously aware that for TE to respond, action points need to be set out as firm proposals. Next TE agenda for 8 November meeting discussed. NEBCC notes will be on agenda. PB noted that he had sent an email to Severn Trent re water fountains, as a measure to reduce the need for single use plastic bottles. KR noted that there may be a small TC fund for a drinking fountain also.

**Himalayan Balsam** - AH noted that he had walked through Southwell recently along the Greet and Potwell Dyke and noted a lot of HB on water course banks. Concern that there is likely to be a lot of it upstream. 10 years ago the landowners were not keen for people to come onto their land to help deal with this problem. Their position may have changed in the interim, though it will be necessary for any communication with them to be very tactful and careful. Also concern that people might have bought properties with riverfront access, who are not aware that it is their legal obligation to remove HB and also Knotweed, which is present in places. MR noted that recent flooding will not have helped, as seed dispersal very likely. MR also noted that small HB plants are more difficult to spot and only when it grows and flowers that it is more obvious. MR noted that having a group of people who would be prepared to work on the land would be great, as TC staff cannot do all that is needed at times. Southwell generally an engaged town and there are other groups, eg flood forum group. Possible involvement of young farmers and maybe Brackenhurst students. Possible Minster school students also. However issues with H&S requirements for younger people. AP agreed to discuss with contact about involving Brackenhurst, though some concerns about ensuring consistent involvement. May 2024 for action on HB?

**Neighbourhood Plan** - AH noted concern among local landowners because of proposals in Neighbourhood Plan, particularly to increase Green Belt. Noted that NP is still in consultation phase and all freeform representations will be considered, despite some limitations in the online questionnaire.

**Green Southwell** - in view of APs first attendance, principal issues for GS. Last meeting very informal, but discussed recent pesticide trial and feedback from Neighbourhood Plan. Ash

Tree Spinney and Beryl's Meadow. Positive meeting between GS and TC staff, including Clerk to discuss management of Beryl's Meadow. Agreed that area needs to look tidier, whilst still achieving GS objectives. Problems with weather and not being able to carry out tasks on time noted by MR.

**Woodland Management Plan** – was agreed by Full Council in October. Level of (lack of) risk of trees noted.

**Pesticide Trial** – Some confusion about TCs involvement in the recent trial. Trial of different approaches proposed by TC and made request for NCC and NSDC not to use pesticides, small trial carried out, results to be discussed in due course, to consider whether to extend. Similar trials in other areas of county and district. Always different views about 'weeds' vs 'wild flowers' and where they should grow.

**Ash Tree Spinney** – timing of tree works not clear, though previously agreed that it should be Autumn 2023.

**Zero Hour** – cross-party group seeking support from local councils for Climate and Ecology Bill, which has its second reading in Parliament on 24 November. PB played a 2 minute YouTube video, which sets out the issue. All in this meeting agreed to support. PB likely to raise at Full Council. KR noted the need for a formal proposal to be put and PB agreed to formulate this.

**Establishing carbon footprint for council** – AH has not been able to make progress on accessing records of utility use, as TC staff have not had time to contact provider. So far this process has taken 2 years. Clerk has given commitment for it to be done at some point. Discussion whether a Cllr can undertake this task, if TC staff are not able to spend the time on it. AH expressed concern about risk of NEBCC just being a talking shop, without achieving practical targets.

**Involvement of Young People** – PB will be attending an event at Minster School and may take the opportunity to speak with teachers about student engagement in NEBCC (and also possibly a Youth Council). Noted that there has been joint working between TC and the school in recent months.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points** – possible creation of charging points in the leisure centre car park.

**Food Waste** – No update, KR will raise again in NSDC.

**Trees for Climate** – PB to enquire whether Woodland Management Group will address this issue or whether this is a task for this group. Unclear whether Woodland Trust offer and NCC offer to provide trees are the same or separate.

**Sewage Discharges into the Greet** – AH suggested that we take a look at discharges at times of heavy rain, whether the discharges are every time there is a weather event or only occasionally. He agreed to examine the available information, including FOI requests. STW

approach to separating surface water drainage from foul water drainage? Planning proposals to consider questions being raised on this point? Provision of subsidised water butts?

**Battery Storage Proposals** – No recent updates, though several local proposals are in the offing.

**20 mph zones** – communication sent to NCC on this issue following P&H meeting 1.11.23. Alternative of creating traffic calming measure to encourage lower speeds.

**Achievable actions** – Need to ensure that NEBCC achieves tangible objectives.

### **Proposals**

1. PB will develop a proposal to Full Council asking for the Council's support for the Climate and Ecology Bill
2. TE to be asked to consider asking for a communication to be sent to local landowners, asking them to work with the TC in dealing with invasive plant species.
3. To clarify with TE whether WMG will be taking forward the offers of trees made by NCC and/or Woodland Trust.
4. Ask TC Planning and Highways Committee to raise with NSDC whether drainage issues can be part of future planning considerations.

**Next Meeting**                      **Thurs 11 January 2024, 7pm**

PB 09.11.23